

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 020065

FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM BELL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: U.S.-PANAMA TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: MEDIA REPORTS
OF NEGOTIATING "AGREEMENTS"

1. I EXPLAINED TO GONZALEZ-REVILLA LAST NIGHT, SPEAKING
ALSO FOR ELLSWORTH AND BILL ROGERS, THAT WE WERE DISMAYED
AT THE REVELATIONS OF ALLEGED NEGOTIATING PROGRESS ON
ISSUES WE HAD ADDRESSED DURING THE LAST ROUND, THOUGH THE
REVELATIONS WERE INACCURATE AND WERE CONFINED PRINCIPALLY
TO EXPRESSIONS OF THE PANAMANIAN POSITION. THEY WOULD
SURELY BE PICKED UP BY CONGRESSIONAL AND OTHER OPPONENTS
OF A NEW TREATY AND COULD AFFECT THE COURSE OF NEGOTIATION.

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2. GONZALEZ-REVILLA SAID THE MEDIA REPORTS SURPRISED HIM

AS MUCH AS THEY DID US AND, AFTER TELEPHONING TORRIJOS, EMPHASIZED TO ME THAT THEY INVOLVED NO OFFICIAL STATEMENTS BY THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT.

3. I SAID WE RECOGNIZED THAT, BUT WE COULD ONLY ASSUME THEY INVOLVED LEAKS FROM HIGH GOVERNMENT SOURCES.

4. AS A RESULT, AND ALSO AS A RESULT OF THE UNCERTAIN POLITICAL CLIMATE THESE DAYS IN PANAMA, I EXPLAINED THAT WE COULD NOT CONFIRM AT THIS TIME THE DATES FOR OUR TRAVEL

TO PANAMA FOR THE NEXT ROUND. GONZALEZ-REVILLA WAS SUITABLY APPALLED. AS I LEFT HE WAS TELEPHONING TORRIJOS AGAIN.

5. THE TIME MAY BE APPROACHING WHEN WE MAY WANT TO ABANDON OUR POLICY OF REFRAINING FROM PUBLIC COMMENT WENEVER PANAMA "GOES PUBLIC" RESPECTING THE NEGOTIATIONS. WE MIGHT INSTEAD ISSUE DENIALS (WHEN APPROPRIATE), AND SOME FORM OF REPRIMAND CONCERNING THE VIOLATION OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF NEGOTIATIONS. WOULD WELCOME YOUR THOUGHTS ON HOW SUCH A POSTURE WOULD BE LIKELY TO AFFECT TORRIJOS. KISSINGER

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